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RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 6995
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RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 7591
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 0664
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2537
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2194
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 8575
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 9123
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STATE FOR I/RF, PA/PR/FPC/W, IIP/G/EA, EAP/PD, R/MR,
EAP/J, EAP/P, PM;
USTR FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE;
TREASURY FOR OASIA/IMI;
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA;
CP BUTLER OKINAWA FOR AREA FIELD OFFICE;
PACOM HONOLULU FOR PUBLIC DIPLOMACY ADVISOR

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - SECTARIAN VIOLENCE IN
IRAQ, NATO SUMMIT, AND PAKISTAN

¶1. LEAD STORIES: All Tuesday morning papers gave top
play to yesterday's expiration of gasoline surcharges
for road construction, noting that pump prices fell at
a number of stations across Japan at midnight.

¶2. "'Six-Day War' Highlights Instability" The liberal
Asahi reported from Cairo (4/1): "While the recent
battle between Iraqi security forces and the Mahdi Army
of Shiite cleric al-Sadr, termed a 'Six-Day War,'
appears to be coming to an end, it demonstrates the
fragile security situation in Iraq, which had been said
to be improving. This conflict could have an impact on
the compilation of plans for a full-fledged pullout of
U.S. and British forces.... Prime Minister Maliki went
to Basra with the resolve that it be the final
showdown. However, as the battle demonstrated the
strength of the Mahdi Army while exposing the limit of
his security forces, the prime minister appears to have
little choice but to accept a 'truce' through
behind-the-scenes negotiations."

¶3. "Russia Determined to Prevent Encroachment into its
Backyard" A Moscow correspondent for the conservative
Sankei wrote (4/1): "Russia is deeply concerned about
NATO coming into its 'backyard,' namely Georgia and
Ukraine. President Putin considers the possibility of
their membership in NATO 'intolerable' and will use
every means available to prevent this from coming to
pass.... Putin is expected to attend a NATO session
scheduled for Friday. He apparently will attempt to
head off NATO's eastward expansion by NATO cargo bound
for Afghanistan to pass through Russian territory."

14. "Pakistan Opts for Dialogue to Combat Terrorism" The conservative Sankei said in a report from Bangkok (4/1): "In his key policy address on Saturday, Pakistani Prime Minister Gilani revealed a change in the country's hard line toward Islamic armed rebels by declaring that he would hold talks with them. As the prime minister has at the same time pledged to continue the war on terrorism with the U.S., there appears to be an inconsistency in his statements. The outlook for the war on terrorism in Pakistan is becoming increasingly murky."

SCHIEFFER